

U.S. Assistance in the Fight against Ebola in West Africa

- The United States has committed more than \$21 million to combat Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa since the outbreak was first reported in March 2014.
- The latest funding of \$1.7 million will be used to provide direct food assistance to Ebola patients in Liberia, in partnership with the World Food Program (WFP).
- A 26-member Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) is in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea to oversee the U.S. Government response to the Ebola crisis.
- The Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has more than 70 disease-control experts in West Africa, providing technical expertise to national public health agencies to help prevent, detect, and stop the spread of Ebola.
- In April 2014 the U.S. recognized the need to have testing for Ebola done in Liberia instead of sending to Guinea or Sierra Leone for results. Experts from the U.S. Defense Department's Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) upgraded the testing laboratory at the Liberia Institute for Biological Research (LIBR) so that the lab could test for Ebola. Since that time, U.S. laboratory experts working in Liberia have helped to more than double LIBR's testing capacity to 98 Ebola specimens a day from 40 specimens.
- CDC, in partnership with the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network and the U.S. National Institutes of Health, established the second Ebola testing laboratory in Liberia, a mobile testing laboratory at the ELWA campus to shorten the response time of tests for patients at the largest facility currently in Liberia.
- In the past week (Aug. 24-31), the U.S. Government, through DART, has airlifted more than 16 tons of medical supplies and emergency equipment to Liberia, including:
 - 500 infrared thermometers to bolster Ebola screening efforts
 - 5,000 body bags to be distributed to areas of need.
 - 10,000 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - 2 water treatment units
 - 2 portable water tanks, capable of storing 10,000 liters each
 - 100 rolls of plastic sheeting for use in construction of Ebola treatment units.
- In addition to bringing in supplies from outside the region, DART has purchased basic supplies locally, including:
 - 50,000 pieces of soap
 - 400 mattresses
 - 5,200 gallons of chlorine
 - 2,500 buckets

- USAID has provided WHO with 105,000 sets of PPE for healthcare staff and outbreak investigators in Ebola-affected countries.
- A charter flight, funded by the U.S. Government and UNICEF, brought more than 40 tons of chlorine and 400-thousand pairs of medical gloves into Monrovia.
- DART is working to expand the pipeline of medical equipment and supplies flowing into Monrovia in coming days and weeks to ensure that healthcare workers have the resources they need to safely do their jobs.
- The United States is supporting the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), which is operating flights in and out of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea to help ensure that critical supplies, medical equipment, and personnel get to areas of need despite commercial flight limitations.
- CDC and the DART are training local healthcare workers on proper use of medical equipment, including PPE, ways to prevent the spread of the disease and how to detect if someone has EVD.
- Last week, CDC Director Tom Frieden and USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance Director Jeremy Konyndyk spent three days in Liberia to assess the impact of the Ebola outbreak, review response activities, and discuss disease prevention and treatment strategies with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, other government officials, international partners and NGOs.
- DART is working with the Liberian government to improve operations at its emergency call center, where volunteers receive an average of 1,000 calls a day.
- USAID and CDC are working with local NGOs to support outreach campaigns and develop public messages on how to prevent, detect, and stop the spread of the virus. The messages are being conveyed through radio, text, newspapers and through “town criers.”
- The U.S. military has trained 230 members of the Armed Forces of Liberia on the proper use of PPE, safe handling of patients, securing health sites, and escorting humanitarian and medical personnel. The training is part of U.S. Operation Onward Liberty, a five-year program run by the U.S. Departments of State and Defense to support and strengthen the Armed Forces of Liberia.
- In the early stages of the Ebola outbreak, DTRA, the Defense Department’s office in charge of countering weapons of mass destruction, provided PPE to the Liberian government, including surgical gowns, protective coveralls, protective gloves, and decontamination hand sprayers.

###